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DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
Human Resources Committee

Office of the Chairman

HRC-C-76-047

16 NOV 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: The National Foreign Intelligence Board

FROM: Ambassador Edward S. Little
Chairman, Human Resources Committee

SUBJECT: Report on the FOCUS Review Program

1. This provides an update report to members of the National Foreign Intelligence Board (NFIB) on the FOCUS Review Program. In June 1975, General Wilson, then acting Chairman, Human Sources Committee, provided a brief report on the FOCUS Program to the United States Intelligence Board (USIB). I believe it is appropriate now to bring the NFIB up to date on the continuing FOCUS Program. This report is mine as chairman--it does not reflect the collective thinking of the Human Resources Committee (HRC). However, as we introduce improvement in the FOCUS Program, we have and will continue to make changes with the advice and support of the full Committee. This report summarizes what has been accomplished since the beginning of FOCUS, where FOCUS is today, and sketches out general plans for the future. We see FOCUS as an evolving program; we expect continuing changes to make it more effective.

2. Where FOCUS Has Been

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25X1 The HRC will not attain its general objective of completing seven reviews in the second half of 1976, since two--FOCUS [redacted] are being postponed until next year. Our scheduling of FOCUS Reviews is largely dependent upon the availability of the National Intelligence Officers (NIOs), who continue to play a key role in the FOCUS Program. We expect to complete FOCUS [redacted] early next year. 25X1

Our basic procedures for the conduct of individual FOCUS Reviews continue as established last year. FOCUS retains its two phases. Part I assesses the substance of reporting from all elements of selected U.S. Missions abroad, i.e., its adequacy and timeliness and its responsiveness to national intelligence needs. Reporting assessments are written by the appropriate NIO on the basis of inter-agency seminars in which both policy and intelligence officers participate. All human source reporting is examined usually by category (political, military, economic, etc.) and emphasis remains on overt collection. There is provision for dissenting views to be recorded.

Part II, the Action Review, examines reporting problems and opportunities arising out of the reporting assessment and recommends follow-up action. Parts I and II with a description of the FOCUS Program are forwarded to the Ambassador concerned under a personal letter from the DCI. Additional details on the FOCUS Program are provided in an article on FOCUS appearing in the August 1976 issue of the Review of National Intelligence.

The major benefits of the FOCUS Review Program to date have accrued to the Intelligence Community in Washington. Some of the most useful aspects of FOCUS never appear on paper--nor should they. In our view, the individual preparation of participants, prior to Part I itself, and their interactions with each other before, during and after the assessment seminars continue to be of considerable, if not necessarily measurable, value. Some problems of communications and coordination on the Washington level are resolved during the FOCUS process. Others, although identified, remain hanging. We are concerned about this and are considering some sort of follow-up mechanism.

3. FOCUS Today

FOCUS was designed to provide U.S. Missions abroad with an authoritative statement of Intelligence Community reactions to their reporting efforts. In recent FOCUS Reviews, we have attempted to involve Chiefs of Mission directly in the program. As a prelude to each review the Ambassador involved is now alerted by a letter from me, and is asked to participate by providing the Human Resources Committee with his insights about the Mission's reporting program and his evaluation of intelligence guidance and other support provided by Washington. This new initiative is designed to stimulate a dialogue with the Chief of Mission and assure him that we need and want to take his views carefully into account.

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Reactions from Ambassadors have been encouraging and constructive. We received timely responses from Ambassador [redacted] in [redacted] as well as very helpful letters from Ambassador [redacted] and Ambassador [redacted]. Their responses gave us a better understanding of their collection and reporting environments, which are not always appreciated here; they also have asked us for better statements of what we in Washington want in their reporting. Specifically, they seek indications of priorities to assist them in allocating their limited resources.

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These inputs from Ambassadors have led us naturally to what may become FOCUS Part III. Following the FOCUS Assessment (Part I) and Action Review (Part II) we develop an interagency summary of national intelligence needs. We are making a concerted effort to make these statements concise and reflect priorities of national intelligence needs. This collection guidance statement is sent by me to the Ambassador as a follow-up to the FOCUS report. We are not yet fully satisfied with these guidance statements but hope to make them a more effective instrument in the coming months.

4. FOCUS Plans for the Near Term

Our next task is to establish the FOCUS Review schedule for 1977. As before, we have asked NFIB agencies and the NIOs for their recommendations; we are receiving serious responses, some of which present difficulties. High on several recommendation lists are our most important diplomatic missions, such as [redacted] as well as some countries in which we do not have embassies. These specific countries present problems for FOCUS by the complexity for human resources reporting. We see a need, perhaps, to review reporting from these missions piecemeal; that is, review one of the major categories (political, economic or military) first, then fill in later with the other categories. Of course, the more technical collection systems also enter importantly into the equation here. We hope to be able to start some sort of evaluative effort against these critical [redacted] targets soon.

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One aspect of FOCUS worthy of note has been the active support of the Department of State in recent months. We have seen excellent State representation at the reporting assessment seminars including country directors and desk officers as well as analysts from INR. State is now considering requesting us to increase the number of FOCUS Reviews each year, perhaps, to as many as 25. The feasibility of this expanded number is now being reviewed.

5. Continuing Problems

FOCUS has its problems; I cite a few. FOCUS studies have always taken too long to complete and they are becoming more complicated. Individual assessments are uneven in quality, and Washington managers sometimes are overly defensive and are not sufficiently dedicated to

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the only objective of FOCUS--improvement of reporting. Efforts must continue to involve Chiefs of Mission in the FOCUS process so that they will regard it as a tool to assist them and their country team in improving reporting by their Mission.

Then too, interest in interagency reporting assessment seminars has so increased--involving so many NFIB and non-NFIB members--that frequently 40 or more persons are in attendance; the size is unwieldy, the scope of the agendas often quite formidable.

As in other areas of the intelligence effort, we are attempting to ascertain just what it is that U.S. policy-makers consider important and how policy translates into intelligence needs. A better access to or definition of national policy concerns would help us significantly in FOCUS.

6. In sum, I view the FOCUS Review Program as constructive and worthwhile. It has its weaknesses. FOCUS is evolving and, I believe, in the proper direction. Our current emphasis is on assisting the overseas mission in its very difficult task of gathering and reporting information. In early 1977, I shall be reporting to the National Foreign Intelligence Board on all activities of the Human Resources Committee. At that time I shall report further on the FOCUS Program.



Edward S. Little

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MEMORANDUM FOR: *Dick ?*

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their way.

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Date *11/23*

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